

**AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Page 117, please amend the last paragraph, which begins with “Returning to Fig. 3” and which ends on page 118, as follows:

Returning to Fig. 3, which illustrates the exchange node architecture, retail engines 38 include a load search engine 42 that permits an exchange user to search loads using criteria specified in the load search request screens (Figs. 4D-4H) or man-machine graphical user interface 32 as it is called in Fig. 3. Retail engines 38 further includes a trading engine 44, whose function is described below, and a price search engine 46, which allows, in a manner described in greater detail below, the exchange users to analyze retail trades. Similarly, the optimization engines 40 include a load search engine 48, which allows ESPs to search ESP loads using criteria specified in load search screens (Figs. 4K-4M), a trading engine 50, and a price search engine 52, which allows ESPs to analyze optimization trades. In each local facility 20, the exchange node is connected via a bus 54, a data base interface 56, and a second data bus to the exchange database 58.